



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
PWS&D Sunday, February 1, 2026
Worship at Home

Email: northpelham.rockwaypc@gmail.com Website: <https://northpelhamrockwaypresbyterian.ca>

CALL TO WORSHIP (provided by PWS&D in the PCC)

L: Come, let us worship God, who gives us life and a world that sustains life.

P: We praise God for the gift of creation.

L: Come, let us follow Jesus Christ, who calls us to hope and to act for justice.

P: We give thanks to God, who restores the broken and the forgotten.

L: Come, let us be led by the Holy Spirit, who brings new life and stirs hope within us.

P: We praise the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Life-Giver.

Hymn 436 **God, we praise you for the morning**

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord's Prayer

We gather as your people, O God. We come to worship, seeking good gifts for wisdom to live faithfully, for courage to face what is difficult, and for strength to grow rather than shrink in fear. Expand our faith and deepen our hope, so that your love within us may shine toward all whom we meet.

Come to us in this hour, O God. Clear away the burdens we carry: the judgments we hold against others, the doubts we hold about ourselves, and the ways we turn away from the suffering of the world. Fill us with your love, and with trust in what your love can do in us and through us. In this quiet moment, we bring before you the confessions of our hearts. (silence)

Come to us again, O God, and fill us with good things in this time of worship. Forgive us where we have made choices that harm others, harm creation, and diminish life. Restore us, lift us up, and renew us, that we may walk in your justice and compassion. Speak to us now, and reveal your living presence among us.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the One who showed us your love in action and who taught us to pray together, saying:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Peace of Christ

L: May the Peace of Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you. (*congregational response*)

Hymn 328

This is my Father's world

Prayer for Understanding

God of justice and compassion,

open our hearts as we hear your Word. Help us to see your care for life and to follow your call with love and hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Psalm 146

Matthew 25: 31-40

SERMON**God's Justice is Compassion for Life**

*<This sermon was originally written by Christine Samuels,
PWS&D Champion at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket, Ontario,
and has been adapted for today's worship.>*

Today we gather to celebrate and reflect on the ministry of Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)—a vital mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Through PWS&D, our church reaches out in Christ's name to people around the world, helping families overcome hunger, gain access to clean water, grow sustainable food, and build a future with dignity and hope.

This ministry reminds us that God's mission is not only about belief, but about life—real human life. It is about God's justice, a justice shaped by compassion, mercy, and care for those in need. On this Sunday, it is fitting that we turn to two Scripture passages that show us both who God is and who we are called to be: Psalm 146 and Matthew 25.

Psalm 146 proclaims, "The Lord gives food to the hungry and lifts up those who are bowed down." In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us that when we feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, or welcome the stranger, we are serving Him. Together, these passages invite us to take part in God's compassionate work in the world.

Psalm 146 begins with a clear warning: "Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help." The psalmist turns our attention away from worldly power and human systems, and toward God alone—the One who brings true justice and lasting hope. Human systems may fail, but God remains faithful.

The psalm goes on to describe who this God is and how God acts. God executes justice for the oppressed. God gives food to the hungry. God lifts up those who are weighed down. God

protects the foreigner and sustains the orphan and the widow. This is not a distant or passive God. This is a God who notices suffering, responds to need, and acts to preserve life.

At the same time, the psalm reminds us that God reigns forever. God frustrates the ways of the wicked and keeps every promise across generations. “The Lord will reign forever,” the psalmist declares, “your God, O Zion, for all generations.” God’s justice is not temporary or selective. It is faithful, steady, and enduring.

This is where we begin to understand the difference between human justice and God’s justice. Human justice often focuses on rules, fairness, and equal treatment. These things matter, and they help keep order in society. But God’s justice goes deeper. God’s justice focuses on life, dignity, and compassion—especially when people do not have what they need to live.

God’s justice pays special attention to those who are vulnerable, forgotten, or pushed aside. God does not simply ask, “Is this fair?” God asks, “Is anyone hungry? Is anyone thirsty? Is anyone suffering without help?” This is the justice Psalm 146 describes—a justice shaped by mercy and care for life.

Through our support of PWS&D, we are invited to step into this work. We join God’s mission when marginalized communities are supported to grow food that can survive drought, when families learn new skills to provide for themselves, and when clean water becomes available where it was once scarce. In doing so, we do not replace God’s work—we participate in it.

Matthew 25:31–40 deepens this calling. Jesus paints a powerful picture of the final judgment, where the Son of Man comes in glory and separates the nations as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. At first, this passage may sound like it is about good deeds. But at its heart, it reveals the nature of true discipleship and the heart of God’s kingdom.

Jesus identifies Himself completely with those in need: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the imprisoned. This is a startling truth. Jesus does not simply care about people who suffer—He places Himself among them. “Truly I tell you,” Jesus says, “just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.”

In these words, Jesus removes any separation between loving God and loving our neighbour. Service to those who are vulnerable becomes holy ground. When we care for others, we encounter Christ Himself.

This means that Christian compassion is never optional. It is not an extra part of faith—it is at the heart of faith. We are called to see every person as created in God’s image, with deep worth and dignity. When we truly understand this, our hearts are moved toward mission, generosity, and justice. We begin to desire that no one be left behind.

Jesus shows us this way through His own life. He left the glory of heaven to walk among the poor, the sick, the outcast, and the broken. His service was not driven by duty or pride, but by love. In the same way, our service must never come from obligation alone. We serve because we

have been served. We love because we have been loved. We lift others because we ourselves have been lifted by God's grace.

This is why every act of compassion through PWS&D is more than humanitarian aid or long-term development. Every meal shared, every seed planted, every water system built becomes a place where Christ is encountered. When we provide therapeutic food for a child in Malawi, teach sustainable farming in Guatemala, or help communities rebuild after disaster, we are not only helping people survive—we are meeting Christ in the lives of those we serve.

As theologian N. T. Wright writes in his book *Simply Jesus*, “When Jesus wanted to sum up what the kingdom of God looks like, he told stories about people who looked after one another in practical, costly ways.” This is exactly what the ministry of PWS&D seeks to embody.

One powerful example of this work can be seen in Guatemala. Nearly half of Guatemala's population is Indigenous. Many Indigenous communities continue to face serious challenges due to long histories of racism and inequality. These challenges include high levels of poverty, food insecurity, chronic malnutrition, limited access to health care and education, and lack of clean water and sanitation.

Gender-based violence is also a painful reality. Many women and girls experience violence, forced pregnancies, and limited opportunities. These injustices are not just social issues—they are threats to human dignity and life itself.

Through local partners, PWS&D works to address these challenges in meaningful and respectful ways. Indigenous women are supported and empowered to take leadership roles in their communities. Programs focus on food security, education, and reducing inequality between women and men.

At the Francisco Coll School, 269 children received free, quality education last year—helping to break cycles of poverty. The *Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas* supports 400 small-scale farmers and their families to become food secure. Women involved in the *Maya-Mam Association for Research and Development* are stepping into leadership, speaking up about issues that affect their lives and communities. The *Evangelical Centre for Pastoral Studies in Central America* is also working to challenge gender inequality and promote justice.

Clean water projects are another vital part of this work. In the municipality of Comitancillo, rainwater harvesting systems have been installed to provide safe and sustainable access to water.

One participant, Catalina Pérez Aguilón, shares how this has changed her life. She says, “In my community, we have had problems with our drinking water for two years. As women, we had to carry water and walk 25 minutes to the river. It was exhausting. But today I feel happy because of the water tanks. Our family will have safe water for drinking, irrigation for our garden, and hygiene at home. Water is life.”

Her words remind us of a simple truth: water is life. And God’s justice is always concerned with life.

Both Psalm 146 and Matthew 25 call us to an active, living faith. The psalm invites us to trust in God’s faithfulness. Matthew calls us to live out that faith in the world. Faith, then, is not just something we believe—it is something we practice. It is a way of life shaped by compassion and generosity.

When we give to PWS&D, we do more than send money. We send hope. We declare that hunger is not inevitable, that poverty is not acceptable, and that God’s love knows no borders.

Through this shared ministry, we are also transformed. We learn to see the world as Jesus sees it. We recognize Christ in the faces of those who struggle. And we remember that we, too, depend on God’s daily bread.

As learners and followers of Christ, we are called to be bearers of hope in a hungry world. When we give, pray, and serve, we take part in God’s mission of justice and mercy. Through PWS&D, we see what happens when faith becomes love in action: hope takes root where despair once lived.

May we never forget that in every act of compassion, we meet Christ—the One who said, “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.” So let us go and live as people of that kingdom: trusting God’s promises, walking humbly, loving generously, and bringing hope to the hungry—until all are fed and all know they are loved. Amen.

Hymn 229 **Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love**

Invitation to the offering
Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

God of compassion and justice,
receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and trust. May they be used to protect life, restore dignity, and share your hope with those in need. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

We thank you, O God, for all that has happened, is happening, and may yet happen: today, tomorrow, and in the days to come. We thank you for this moment, for the gift of gathering, and for the freedom to open our hearts to your goodness and love. May that goodness and love not only fill us, but flow through us, as we care for one another and as we go out into the world in the days ahead.

We thank you, O God, that even amid the brokenness of our world, goodness continues to rise

through those who find purpose and joy in giving, sharing, and caring. We thank you for this congregation and for the ways your Spirit moves among us, inspiring us, together and individually, to follow the way of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

We give thanks for our shared witness through ministries such as Presbyterian World Service & Development, through which we reach beyond ourselves to serve and restore lives and communities in places like Malawi, Guatemala, Afghanistan, Gaza, Ukraine, and beyond. May the power of love overcome the forces of greed, violence, and displacement that trouble our world.

We pray for those who live on the margins, because of race, sexuality, gender identity, culture, or religion. In a time when justice and inclusion are being challenged and dismantled, strengthen us as followers of Jesus to honour the beauty of diversity, to affirm the dignity of every life, to resist violence and discrimination, and to build communities of welcome, where all are embraced, in body and in spirit.

In times of division and fear, O God, help us to be witnesses to your Spirit, rooted in love, committed to justice, and guided by compassion.

We pray for our nation's economic future. Amid instability and uncertainty, keep us from becoming fearful or hard-hearted. Teach us again the way of Christ to love even when it is difficult, to seek peace over conflict, and to trust that love, expressed through justice, kindness, and mercy, truly has the power to transform the world.

We pray for ourselves and for those near to us: for those seeking meaningful work, for those longing for safe and affordable housing, for those burdened by illness while hoping for rest and security, for those waiting anxiously for citizenship and belonging, for families facing conflict, and for those carrying loneliness or silent pain.

In the quiet of our hearts now, we lift before you the names and concerns we carry. (silence)

We pray especially today for Roy, Diane, and Jill as they grieve Fran, holding sorrow and hope together. We pray for Robert Lampman as he prepares for surgery on Tuesday, February 3—grant him calm, strength, and healing, and guide the hands of those who care for him. We pray for Susan Grimwood as she recovers from surgery; for Jean Rubel, Arlene Burridge, and Janice Wiley in their healing; and for all who suffer quietly, known fully to you.

For healing, we pray. For strength and renewal, we pray. For light, clarity, and courage, we pray. For deep and abiding peace, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Hymn 722

Lord, whose love

BENEDICTION

May God bless you with love for all life, may Jesus Christ lead you in justice and compassion, and may the Holy Spirit give you courage and hope as you serve the world in love. And all God's people said, "Amen."

Sung Response- Go Now In Peace**Postlude**

**We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional
Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe**

Announcements

***Next Sunday Worship on February 8, 2026, at North Pelham**

***Thank you:** "Thank you for all the cards, visits, and phone calls while I was in the hospital and recovering from my recent surgery. Your thoughtfulness was greatly appreciated." – Arlene Burridge

***Monday Tai Chi & Qigong Continues!**

Looking to refresh your body and mind this week? Join us on Mondays at North Pelham for our uplifting Tai Chi & Qigong classes!

- **1:30 PM** – Standing-focused group
- **2:40 PM** – Seated-focused group

No experience needed—just come as you are and enjoy gentle movement, peaceful breathing, and joyful community. Everyone is welcome! Questions? Please speak to Joy or Rev. Jacob.

***Tuesdays – Quilting at North Pelham** - starting at 9:00 am

***Wednesdays - Bible Study:** Join us every Wednesday at 10:00 AM at North Pelham, led by our spiritual leader, Diane McMillan.

***RPCW Meeting:** The RPCW will meet on Wednesday, February 4, at 1:30 PM at the church.

***Session Meeting:** The Joint Session meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 4, at 7:00 PM at Rockway.

***Thursdays – Outreach Walking:** Join us for the Wellness Walk and Coffee Chat! We gather at 9:30 a.m. at Canada Games Park to start our walk together. After the walk, we meet at Rockway for a joyful chat over hot and fresh coffee at 10:45 am.

***Rev. Jacob's Presbytery Ministry Update**

Jacob has concluded his service as Interim Moderator of Stamford Presbyterian Church. In addition to continuing as Interim Moderator of Kirk on the Hill Church in Fonthill, he will begin serving as Interim Moderator of Smithville Presbyterian Church in Smithville as of February 1. He is grateful for the opportunity to serve Christ and the wider church through Presbytery ministry.

***Prayer Requests and Pastoral Care:**

We are a church family, and we are here to pray for you. If you or someone you know is facing illness, surgery, hospitalization, grief, or any other need, please contact your elder or your minister, Jacob, so we can pray with you and offer pastoral care and support. Jacob's contact information: **Phone: 289-213-2797; Email: jacoble0501@gmail.com** Your sharing helps us care for one another faithfully, so that no one walks alone. "*Carry one another's burdens.*" (Galatians 6:2)